

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ARA-10 /064 W
-----201304Z 113677 /22

P R 201213Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8934
INFO USIA WASHDC
ALL EC CAPITALS 0305
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 01907

E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, PINT, FR
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING'S PRESS CONFERENCE
-- FRANCH PRESS REACTIONS

1. THE WHOLE PRESS TUESDAY CONCENTRATED ON PRESIDENT
GISCARD'S PRESS CONFERENCE. SAMPLE HEADLINES:
FRANCE SOIR: "GISCARD ENDED WITH A REMARK THAT ANSWERED
ALL QUESTIONS: 'I WON'T COMPROMISE' ...NEITHER ON PROGRESS
AND JUSTICE...NOR ON FRANCE'S FOREIGN POLICY...NOR ON
THE ELECTION DATE...NOR ON THE BARRE PLAN...NOR ON THE
MULTI-PARTY MEMBERSHIP OF THE MAJORITY;"
FIGARO: "GISCARD ALLAYS TENSIONS WITHIN THE MAJORITY.
CHIRAC TO MEET WITH BARRE TOMORROW AFTERNOON. THE PRIME
MINISTER WILL PERSONALLY WAGE THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTION
FIGHT;"
AURORE: "THE FIFTH REPUBLIC AT A TURN. GISCARD DID MORE
THAN CLARIFY THE POLITICAL SITUATION. 1. THE PRESIDENT
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IS ABOVE PARTY POLITICS; 2. THE PRIME MINISTER IS THE
LEADER OF THE MAJORITY; 3. THE MAJORITY SHOULD NOT BE
UNIFORM BUT MULTIFORM";
QUOTIDIEN : "THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC HAS ATTACHED
NO DRAMATIC IMPORTANCE TO ANY OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS OF
THE DAY;"
HUMANITE : "GISCARD, CHIRAC CLOSE TOGETHER. THIS IS THE

ONLY INFERENCE FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL PLEA."

2. THE GENERAL IMPRESSION IS THAT THE PERFORMANCE WAS EXCELLENT. JEAN D'ORMESSON WRITES IN FIGARO : "ONCE MORE THE PRESIDENT WAS SURPRISINGLY AT EASE IN THE SOFT STORM OF MOROSITY; HE APPEARED AS HAVING TAKEN THE OBSTACLE IN HIS STRIDE. THERE IS A GISCARD D'ESTAING'S MIRACLE...THE MORE DETERIORATED THE SITUATION GETS THE MORE CLEVER THE PRESIDENT APPEARS, SURE OF HIMSELF AND CONFIDENT...WHAT IS SURPRISING, AND INDEED EXCITING WITH VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING IS THAT HE ALWAYS APPEARS, IN THE DARKEST MOMENTS, FULL OF RESOURCES AND OF CONFIDENCE. AND IF HE WERE RIGHT? IF HE WERE RIGHT TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE WISDOM OF THE FRENCH, IN THEIR DESIRE TO GET ALONG; IF HE FAILS, WHAT RISK DOES HE TAKE? BUT IF HE IS RIGHT WHAT A TRIUMPH* THE ONLY PROBLEM IS THAT WE WILL GET THE DEFINITE ANSWER TO THE QUESTIONS WHICH ARE POSED TODAY AFTER THE SECOND BALLOT OF THE L978 ELECTION. IT IS OF COURSE THIS UNCERTAINTY WHICH GIVES TO THE PRESENT CLIMATE ITS COLORATION AND ITS NERVOUSNESS."

3. PLURALISM WITHIN THE MAJORITY IS CERTAINLY THE MOST COMMENTED UPON POINT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE. LES ECHOS SAYS THAT "THE PRESIDENT HAS REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT SOME COMPETITION BETWEEN THE FORMATIONS OF THE MAJORITY IS NOW INDISPENSABLE TO WIN THE ELECTIONS OF L978. IN FRANCE AS IN OTHER DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES, EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON FIVE PERCENT OF THE VOTES. THERE-

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FORE IT IS MANDATORY FOR GISCARD TO REGAIN THOSE WHO ARE TODAY TEMPTED BY THE SOCIALIST PARTY WHILE REMAINING ATTRACTIVE FOR THE OTHERS...IT IS INDEED APPLYING A MARKETING CONCEPTION TO POLITICS: WHERE THERE ARE SEVERAL CATEGORIES OF CUSTOMERS, SEVERAL BRANDS ARE NEEDED. OPPOSITION PAPERS -- I.E. QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS AND HUMANITE -- CONSIDERS THE PRESIDENT ESCAPED THE REAL PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY UNEMPLOYMENT AND PRICES (HUMANITE), DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN THE MAJORITY (QUOTIDIEN).

4. THERE IS A GENERAL CONSENSUS THAT THE PRESIDENT "FULLY SUPPORTS HIS PRIME MINISTER" (EUROPE ONE RADIO), "THE PRESIDENT YESTERDAY BROUGHT A SUPPORT WITHOUT QUALIFICATION TO THE ACTION OF HIS PRIME MINISTER IN THE ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND MONETARY DOMAINS" (FIGARO) "GISCARD HAS INDEED COMPLETELY ENDORSES THE ACTION OF HIS PRIME MINISTER (QUOTIDIEN).

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P R 201213Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8935
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5. ON THE ABU DAOUD CASE, GISCARD'S ANSWER WAS "FIRM"
OR "PASSIONATE". AURORE SAYS THAT WHEN IT CAME TO
INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM "WE HAVE TO NOTE WITH SADNESS
THAT THE PRESIDENT SPOKE OF SOMETHING ELSE..."
FIGARO : "IT WAS WITH RESTRAINED ANGER THAT THE PRESI-
DENT DEALT WITH THE ABU DAOUD AFFAIR. IN HIS VIEW, OUR
COUNTRY HAS BEEN THE OBJECT OF A CAMPAIGN OF 'DISAGREE-
MENT AND INSULTS' ON THE PART OF CERTAIN COUNTRIES 'THAT
DO NOT ACCEPT THE INDEPENDENT POLICIES OF FRANCE'.
THIS REFERRED IN THE FIRST PLACE TO THE U.S., WHERE
THE PALESTINIAN'S RELEASE WAS COMMENTED UPON BY THE
EAST COAST NEWSPAPERS (ESPECIALLY THE NEW YORK TIMES
AND THE WASHINGTON POST) WITH A SELDOM REACHED VIOLENCE
AND HOSTILITY. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE PRESS MERELY
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REFLECTED THE REACTION IN AMERICAN OFFICIAL CIRCLES. REMEMBER THAT THE QUAI D'ORSAY LAST WEEK CALLED 'INADMISSIBLE' A STATEMENT MADE BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN IN WASHINGTON. THE PRESIDENT HAS BROUGHT NO NEW ELEMENT INTO THE CASE RELATIVE TO TO WHAT MR. BARRE SAID ON THE SAME SUBJECT LAST THURSDAY. ...BUT THE PRESIDENT PRIMARILY WANTED TO BELIE THE ACCUSATIONS OF THOSE WHO ACCUSE FRANCE OF DOING NOTHING AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM." LE MONDE EDITORIAL: "COMMENTING ON THE FOREIGN REACTIONS TO THE RELEASE OF ABU DAOUD, MR. GISCARD D'ESTAING, FOR ONCE, EMPLOYED THE DECLAMATORY TONE OF DE GAULLE, AND YET HE SAYS THAT HE IS AVERSE TO USING IT. THERE INDEED WAS MATTER FOR ANY FRENCHMAN TO GROW INDIGNANT...THE MISCHIEVOUS JOY FELT BY SOME COMMENTATORS IS SUSPECT. FRANCE HAS NOT BEEN POPULAR IN THE ANGLO-SAXON PRESS, NOR IN MANY COUNTRIES IN EUROPE, SINCE GEN DE GAULLE CAME TO POWER: MAINLY, AND MR. GISCARD D'ESTAING WAS RIGHT TO RECALL THIS, BECAUSE THE LEADERS IN THESE COUNTRIES DO NOT LIKE THE INDEPENDENT POLICY OF PARIS. AFTER THE SIX-DAY WAR AND THE GENERAL'S CHANGE OF ATTITUDE TOWARD ISRAEL, PRO-ISRAELI CIRCLES ADDED A PASSIONATE OVERTONE TO THIS DISAPPROVAL. IT WAS ASTONISHING TO SEE ALMOST THE SAME PASSION DIRECTED AGAINST DE GAULLE WHEN HE DIRECTLY PROVOKED THE U.S. AND THE OTHER ALLIES, AND AGAINST THE PRESENT PRESIDENT, WHOSE TASTE FOR CONCILIATION SOMETIMES TURNS INTO WEAKNESS. BUT THERE IS CONCILIATION AND CONCILIATION. AND CONCILIATION TOWARD THE ARABS IS LESS ACCEPTABLE THAN OTHER ONES. AT THE SAME TIME, IT WAS DIGNIFIED, BUT VAIN, FOR THE FRENCH PRESIDENT TO SAY THAT 'FRANCE DOESN'T NEED LESSONS FROM ANYONE'. THE WESTERN PRESS IN GENERAL, AND THE AMERICAN PRESS IN PARTICULAR -- STILL RIDING HIGH ON ITS WATERGATE FEATS -- IS FOREVER GIVING LESSONS TO GOVERNMENTS ALL OVER THE WORLD, STARTING WITH ITS OWN. IN THE SAME WAY, THE FRENCH PRESS CRITICIZES THE AMER-

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ICAN GOVERNMENT OVER MAJOR AND MINOR MATTERS, AND DOES NOT ALWAYS DO SO FAIRLY. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION CARRIES WITH IT THE RIGHT OT MISTAKES AND EXCESSES."

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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